Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Journal of Political Ideologies

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/cjpi20

A Russian version of reactionary modernism: Aleksandr Prokhanov's 'spiritualization of technology'

Juliette Faure

To cite this article: Juliette Faure (2021) A Russian version of reactionary modernism: Aleksandr Prokhanov's 'spiritualization of technology', Journal of Political Ideologies, 26:3, 356-379, DOI: 10.1080/13569317.2021.1885591

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/13569317.2021.1885591

Published online: 11 Feb 2021.

Submit your article to this journal

Article views: 848

View related articles

View Crossmark data

Full Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at
https://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?journalCode=cjpi20

JOURNAL OF POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES
2021, VOL. 26, NO. 3, 356–379
https://doi.org/10.1080/13569317.2021.1885591

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Check for updates

A Russian version of reactionary modernism: Aleksandr Prokhanov's 'spiritualization of technology'

Juliette Faure

Center for International studies (CERI), Political Science, Sciences Po, Paris, France

ABSTRACT

In the 1970s, the Soviet journalist and writer Aleksandr Prokhanov (born 1938) sought to initiate a new literary aesthetic based on a syncretic vision of technology and spirituality. While he represented an isolated position in conservative circles during the Soviet Union, his enthusiasm for technological modernity is now commonplace among contemporary Russian conservatives. Prokhanov has managed to evolve from the position of a fringe ideologue at the margins of the public sphere in the 1990s to a public figure whose ideas are circulated on state mass media and co-opted by political authorities since the late 2000s. This article studies the formation and circulation of Prokhanov's reactionary modernism across the transition from the Soviet Union to post-Soviet Russia. It claims that Prokhanov's hybrid ideology stems from his dual commitment to an anticonformist intellectual background and a loyalist state patriotism. It argues that, on top of his ability to popularize extremist ideas through their literary aestheticization, Prokhanov has successfully developed the resources of an ideological entrepreneur with leadership capacity and charismatic authority among anti-liberal milieus. In the 2000s, his discourse gained legitimacy, strategic utility and public visibility when these capacities matched a shift in the cultural and political contexts brought about by Vladimir Putin's presidency.

1. Introduction

In July 2019, Aleksandr Prokhanov[1] was invited to the Russian Parliament, the State Duma, to present his documentary film, 'Russia – a nation of dream',[2] in front of an audience that included the Chairman of the Duma and all the leaders of the parliamentary groups. The presentation of his movie concluded a one-year tour in the Russian regions, where Prokhanov had shot a series of weekly emissions called 'In search of the Russian dream' and broadcasted on the state TV channel Rossiia 24.[3] Prokhanov's conception of the 'Russian dream' blends industrial and technological achievements with mystic Orthodox spirituality in service of an imperial authoritarian state.[4]

At the age of 83, Prokhanov is a well-known figure in Russia. He is the founder and editor-in-chief of the extreme right-wing newspaper *Zavtra*, one of the leading ideologues of the putsch against Gorbachev's regime in August 1991 and the author of more

CONTACT Juliette Faure juliette.faure@sciencespo.fr
© 2021 Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group

than 60 novels, which mix esoteric, conspirationist, anti-Semitic and neo-Stalinist themes. Since 2012, Prokhanov has also been the director of the Izborskii Club, the largest group of conservative and patriotic ideologues in today's Russia.

Prokhanov has described his ideology as a 'special dynamic conservatism', meant to 'ensure the conservation of resources, including the moral, religious, cultural and anthropological resources, for modernization'.[5] This ideology goes against habitual associations of science and technology with rationality, secularization and liberalization, as found in the Western Enlightenment's theory of modernity.[6] Empirically, liberal modernization theories, which pose that democracy is the regime propelled by the development of science and technology,[7] have been substantiated by the experience of the Soviet Union. Indeed, scholarly literature has shown that scientific and technological development has contributed to the erosion of the Soviet system's centralization and its ultimate liberalization.[8] Accordingly, the Soviet Union has failed to sustain itself as a 'successful non-Western modernity'.[9]

Contrariwise, Prokhanov offers a untypical version of state patriotism according to which technological modernization can marry national, traditional and religious values under the authority of a strong state. He thereby seeks to overcome the dichotomy between political conservatism and technological modernity in order to coherently articulate them into a single national development doctrine, offered as an alternative to the Western model of secular technological progress. Similar attempts at marrying state patriotism, scientism and spirituality were made by other ideologues at the dawn of the Soviet Union.[10] Prokhanov, however, has demonstrated unique capacities as one of the leading organizers of the conservative ideological space and one of the most successful popularizers of extremist ideas from 1991 to this day. While his ideas were circumscribed to fringe milieus throughout the 1990s, he has managed to obtain their ascendance in the public debate, their promotion in the central programme of a major group of ideologues, the Izborskii Club, and their circulation on state mass media and in the most authoritative places of political power such as the State Duma.

This article studies the evolution of the career of Prokhanov and of his discourse from the Soviet Union to post-Soviet Russia in order to understand how the hybridity of his modernist and conservative ideology has been formed and how it has successfully been disseminated into the contemporary Russian public sphere.

Although Prokhanov is a central figure in contemporary Russian patriotic and conservative milieus and is often mentioned in political science scholarly literature,[11] he has been given little distinct attention in this field, and comparatively much less than the Eurasianist philosopher Aleksandr Dugin.[12] Prokhanov has been studied in greater detail by literary scholars, who have circumscribed their studies to Prokhanov's post-Soviet prose.[13] The two major works exclusively devoted to Prokhanov include his biography written in Russian by the journalist and literary critique Lev Danilkin in 2007 and the doctoral thesis of the British researcher Edmund Griffiths, who studied Prokhanov as a representative of 'post-Soviet esotericism'.[14]

This article focuses on Prokhanov as an essayist and political thinker and thereby primarily relies on Prokhanov's non-fictional journalistic and ideological texts. The study spans Prokhanov's entire life in order to understand his formation, career and activities in Soviet times and shed light on their legacy and adjustments in post-Soviet Russia. The sources used for this research include Prokhanov's major articles and manifestos

published during the period from 1979 until 1991, his op-eds for his newspaper *Zavtra* during the 1990s,[15] his articles and interviews published in *Zavtra* and other media since 2000 and listed on the Izborskii Club's blog since 2012,[16] his biography by Lev Danilkin published in 2007[17] and a personal interview carried out in February 2019 in Moscow.

While these materials allow retrieving the details of Prokhanov's personal, intellectual and professional trajectory, biographical and auto-biographical narratives are also likely to carry 'retrospective illusions', which selectively and artificially align life events into a logical and meaningful chronological order.[18] The article therefore completes the study of discourse with a study of the semantic and social environment in which it was displayed. In this respect, I build on Quentin Skinner's contextualist approach to the study of ideas in order to examine Prokhanov's discourse as an illocutionary practice whose meaning is tied to the context in which it is displayed, determined by his engagement with on-going debates, and the questions and the audience he meant to address.[19] Furthermore, I follow recent attempts at engaging Quentin Skinner's essentially semantic definition of linguistic contexts with Pierre Bourdieu's 'sociology of ideas' to display the social conditions of production and circulation of ideas.[20] Finally, I apply Michael Freeden's conceptual approach to the study of ideologies.[21] I seek to disclose how Prokhanov has reconfigured the 'ideological arrangements' of Russian conservative thought by 'decontesting' the meaning of modernity.[22]

While Prokhanov was a writer officially acclaimed by the Soviet authorities, he has reportedly declined adherence to the Communist Party and has purposely stayed outside party and electoral politics throughout his life, rather claiming for himself the status of an artist 'outside the system'.[23] By exploring the career of his ideas, I mean to study the influence intellectuals can exert in authoritarian contexts by doing 'politics by culture'.[24] Moreover, I intend to use Prokhanov's singular political language, with its flowery, mystical and metaphorical style, as a case study by means of which to push the sociology of ideas from its focus on organized analytical discourse towards the analysis of multi-faceted aesthetics and imaginaries.

Besides, while most studies on Russian nationalism and conservatism focus on cultural values, identity and geopolitics, this article aims to contribute original research to the literature by focusing on Prokhanov's promotion of scientific and technological modernity. Outside the Russian case, the article seeks to provide insight into a renovated form of conservatism, different from the *passéisme* of classic conservatism that was phrased as an answer to the Enlightenment.[25] Prokhanov's ideas resemble the type of political ideology that Jeffrey Herf described in his study of Weimar Germany's conservative revolution and which he identified as 'reactionary modernism'.[26] The article sheds light on a similar and updated discourse in contemporary Russia and the major challenge it poses to liberal modernization theories.

The first part of the article goes back to Prokhanov's youth and formation in the Soviet Union in the 1960s-1970s. I argue that Prokhanov's call for the 'spiritualization of technology' stems from his dual commitment to an anti-conformist intellectual background and a loyalist state patriotism. Moreover, Prokhanov's reactionary modernism took roots in the rediscovery of a domestic philosophical tradition, Russian cosmism, which triggered the interest of certain groups of the Soviet elite in the 1970s and 1980s.

The second part analyses the evolution of Prokhanov, by the end of the 1980s, from an isolated position in conservative cultural milieus to a leading position in the anti-liberal

political opposition against Gorbachev. I argue that Prokhanov's capacity to become one of the key organizers of the anti-liberal ideological field throughout the 1990s contributed to a reshuffling of values' hierarchy inside the Russian conservative worldview and to the eventual domination of modernist conservatism over classic anti-modern conservatism.

The third part of the article studies how Prokhanov has evolved from the position of a fringe ideologue at the margins of the public sphere in the 1990s to a prominent public figure whose ideas have been disseminated through state mass media and co-opted by political authorities since the late 2000s. I argue that Prokhanov's resources as an ideological entrepreneur challenging liberal values matched the changing cultural and political context brought by Vladimir Putin's presidency, which provided new legitimacy, strategic utility and public visibility to his discourse.

The fourth part looks at the institutionalization of Prokhanov's rhetoric into the programme of the organization he founded in 2012, the Izborskii Club, which gathers the largest group of conservative and influential public figures. I argue that the programme of the Izborskii Club shows the effective normalization of reactionary modernism from an isolated worldview defended by Prokhanov to a commonplace in contemporary Russian conservative milieus.

2. Prokhanov's 'spiritualization of technology': an anticonformist attempt to revitalize the Soviet state's ideology

2.1. Prokhanov's anti-conformist cultural and intellectual background (1960s)

A look at Prokhanov's personal and intellectual trajectory reveals how his worldview has been shaped by his acquaintance with marginal and anti-conformist individuals and subcultures.

Prokhanov was born in 1938 in Tbilisi into a family that he describes as atheistic.[27] However, he has built on the religious heritage of his ancestors, who belonged to evangelical groups who had split away from the Russian Orthodox Church. Prokhanov particularly relates to his great uncle, Ivan Prokhanov, who founded the All-Russian Union of Evangelical Christians in 1908 and undertook the construction of a socialist Christian city, 'Evangelsk', until the project was stopped in 1928.[28] In later publications, Aleksandr Prokhanov has hailed him as an 'avant-garde utopian'[29] and has himself pursued his great uncle's attempt to merge Soviet socialism with religious beliefs.[30]

During the second half of the 1950s, Aleksandr Prokhanov studied at the Moscow Aviation Institute. However, in contrast with the growing divide between the social scientists and the natural scientists that began to polarize the Soviet society at that time,[31] he was an engineering student versed in Dadaist poetry. He became a habitué of literary societies and 'Bohemian' salons where, as he reports, 'erotica and decadence united with mystical Orthodoxy'.[32] More importantly, Prokhanov considers that he has mostly been trained outside the university, in the city of Pskov, where he joined a group of architects working on the restoration of medieval churches after their destruction during the Second World War. A local subculture formed in Pskov at that time around an anticonformist community of poets, writers and historians, among whom was the Eurasianist ethnologist Lev Gumilev. The frequenting of this society gave rise to Prokhanov's passion for non-Soviet Russian ancestral and religious patrimony. Ever

since Prokhanov has repeatedly referred to the city of Pskov as the symbol of the 'Russian Renaissance'[33] – a place where, despite the Soviet official narrative, the 'whole Russian history' was reborn.[34]

In 1962, Prokhanov gave up on his career as an engineer to settle down in the city of Istra, an hour and a half from Moscow, where he reportedly worked for three years as a forester.[35] He recalls these recluse years as a transformative period of acquaintance with rural folklore that helped him acquire his 'vocabulary' as a writer.[36] This is also where Prokhanov met another of his mentors, Lev Lebedev, the future priest who baptized him into Orthodoxy in 1974. At the time, Lebedev was working as an historian in the local museum of the New Jerusalem Monastery. While Nikita Khrushchev's anti-religious campaign was at its peak, Lebedev introduced Prokhanov to Orthodoxy.[37]

Two other figures played a major role in the formation of Prokhanov's anti-conformist worldviews in the 1960s. First, he was a regular visitor to Iurii Mamleev's 'Iuzhinskii Circle' in Moscow. The Circle gathered a company of 'esotericists' and 'mystics' to discuss Gnosticism, magic and metaphysics. Their readings included, among others, the traditionalist philosophers René Guenon and Julius Evola or the Mahabharata.[38] Prokhanov remembers their meetings as radically subversive and iconoclastic:

> [We] conjured, mocked, recited poems, drank vodka, defamed the authorities, broke the taboo not only of Soviet ethics and Soviet ideology, but also of everything that had been sealed over thousands of centuries of culture.[39]

Prokhanov's circle of friends and mentors at that time also included Konstantin Pchelnikov, who was an avant-garde constructivist architect fallen out of fame under Khrushchev. As Prokhanov acknowledges, Pchelnikov transmitted to him his futurist and holistic conception of technology as an all-pervading and expanding power, which he calls the 'technosphere'.[40]

2.2. Prokhanov's machine aesthetic: a literary coup

Despite his connections with marginal and non-conformist cultural milieus in his youth, Prokhanov turned into a strong supporter of the Soviet state when he became a war reporter at the end of the 1960s. This duality between a culturally anticonformist background and his political loyalism led him to occupy a unique position in the literary field.

Prokhanov started his career as a journalist in 1968 as a correspondent for *Literaturnaia Gazeta (The Literary Newspaper)*, a renowned newspaper among the Soviet intelligentsia. A year later, he asked to be sent to the Damanskii Island to report on the military conflict taking place at the border with China. Prokhanov refers to this experience as a decisive turning point, after which he turned into a staunch supporter of the Soviet state and the Soviet army.

> When I became a correspondent for Literaturnaia Gazeta, I was young, inexperienced, naïve. I was writing on folkloric topics [...]. And then I ended up in Damanskii. I, a fugitive man, a man of toys, folklore, ended up in the middle of an armoured troop-carrier, among blood.[41]

A series of other war front experiences followed until the mid-1980s. Prokhanov covered the war in Afghanistan and other 'hot spots' such as Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe,

Namibia, Syria, Pakistan and Nicaragua.[42] His time with the military shaped his vocabulary as a writer and furthered his interest for industrial and technological power:

> I flew over the Arctic on strategic bombers, sailed autonomously in boats, moved with mobile rocket launchers in the taiga, observed, and then described a nuclear explosion at a training ground in Semipalatinsk.[43]

On top of his activity as a journalist, Prokhanov also made his way in the literary field as a writer in the 1970s. Although working under the constraints of censorship, literature at that time had started challenging the official canons of socialist realism. Two alternative literary schools had formed. On the one hand, a conservative, 'populist' (*narodnicheskii*) 'village prose' celebrated the pre-revolutionary rural traditions and pre-technological pastoral life. Novels by Valentin Rasputin or Vasily Belov, for instance, offered a cultural and moral critique of the growing technological modernization that they associated with the westernization of the country and the loss of traditional values.[44] By the 1970s, this school had become the dominant cultural and literary movement in the Soviet society. In contrast, a more liberal literature, represented by Iurii Trifonov or Anatoly Rybakov, was concerned with urban social issues and the critique of Stalin's legacy.

Prokhanov held an isolated position among these literary schools. His first novel, *I am going my way* (*Idu v put moi*), published in 1971, was prefaced by Iurii Trifonov, but compared rather with the conservatively-minded village prose, as it celebrated the Russian folklore, landscape and pastures. Prokhanov's distinctiveness only intensified throughout the 1970s. While he highly regarded the conservative village prose, his industrial aesthetics and enthusiasm for technology opposed their idealization of the rural past. Prokhanov also rapidly fell out of fame among liberals, who surnamed him as the 'nightingale of the General Staff'[45] for his patriotic celebration of the army and the power of the state. However, despite his loyalist allegiance to the regime, his anti-conformist and spiritualist fervour did not match the official ideological canons displayed in Soviet realism.

By 1979, while he had become a well-known writer and journalist, Prokhanov explicitly challenged the cultural domination of village prose writers in his article called 'The metaphor of modernity', published in *Literaturnaia Gazeta*.[46] The disclaimer of liability added by the editors of the journal is an indication of the daring character of this manifesto oriented against what was at the time the most established and popular literary movement.[47] In an effort seemingly to unite his eclectic sources of inspiration, allegiances and milieus, Prokhanov sought to initiate a new cultural and literary movement based on a syncretic vision of technology and spirituality. He began by stating the important role played by village prose writers, calling them 'excellent masters' for they had followed the 'mission of maintaining tradition'. However, he reproached village prose writers for their disregard for the scientific and technical transformations going on in the Soviet society. In his view, by sticking to the 'snobbery' of a literary tradition set on fixing the 'sick, grieving soul' of a passing rural world, the 'elite village prose' failed to sustain the task of culture, which was to embrace and conquer modernity with an artistic language. He summoned writers to get rid of their 'comfort' and explore the contemporary society, the 'peasant-technocrat' living in 'modern technicized villages', 'the new army', the 'new Moscow', the '"tasteless" high-rise buildings' and the 'atomic submarines'. Further, he claimed that it was necessary to drop the 'antithesis between the "machine" and "spirit"' and reconcile

traditional values with a technologically advanced society. According to him, writers needed to develop a 'new vocabulary' in order to craft artistically a 'metaphor of modernity', which neither qualifies as romantic nostalgia nor technical realism but rather as a search for a poetic, symbolic and imaginative description of modernity.[48]

As put by Yitzhak Brudny, Prokhanov's manifesto 'constituted the greatest challenge that village prose nationalism faced during the Brezhnev era'.[49] Prokhanov's arguments, also displayed in his novel *Mesto Deistviia* (*Place of Action)* in 1980, were specifically discussed during the 'Discussion Club' on 'Man and "Technosphere', which was published in the same year in the journal *Literaturnaia Ucheba (Literary Studies)*. The editors meant to pit Prokhanov against his opponents, who disagreed with his apology for technology and argued that literature was rather meant to defend 'the old, eternal and surviving "passions and contradictions" in human society'.[50] For his part, Prokhanov called his critics 'arrière-garde' philologists and strengthened his claim that reality is dominated by an 'all-pervading "total" technology, the technosphere'.[51] Coining a motto characteristic of his work's endeavour, he claimed that the 'ethical mission of modern art' was the 'spiritualization (*odukhotvorenie)*, deification (*obozhestvlenie*) or, more simply, the humanization (*ochelovechenie*) of technology'.[52]

2.3. Prokhanov's neo-cosmist reactionary modernism: a political call to strengthen the Soviet state ideology

Prokhanov's call to spiritualize technology was not only meant as a slogan for a new literary theory, but it was also intended to shape and re-orient the Soviet state ideology. In many ways, his views resembled the type of 'reactionary modernism' that Jeffrey Herf described in his study of right-wing thinkers in Weimar Germany.[53] Likewise, representatives of the German 'conservative revolution' devised a 'technological romanticism' that sought to 'turn the romantic anti-capitalism of the German Right away from backward-looking pastoralism, pointing instead to the outlines of a beautiful new order [...] in a united, technologically advanced nation'.[54] The 'spiritualization (*Vergeistung*)' of technology, the use of metaphoric language to describe its 'spirit (*Geist*)' was also meant, according to its prominent advocate Ernst Jünger, to achieve the cultural reconciliation of 'nationalism and modern life'.[55]

But more importantly, Prokhanov's worldview took roots in a domestic philosophical and cultural movement, Russian cosmism. Cosmism goes back to the end of the 19th century, when the philosopher Nikolai Fedorov formulated a modernist interpretation of Orthodoxy. According to him, humanity was bound to use techno-scientific progress to start a new phase of active implementation of the Bible's promises: immortality and the resurrection of the dead.[56] Fedorov's syncretic articulation of science and religion married the two opposite trends that shaped Russian thought at the time: the Westernizers, promoters of science and Western techniques and the Slavophiles, defenders of Russian traditions and orthodoxy. In contrast with both secular positivism and religious traditionalism, Fedorov claimed that modern science could be oriented towards the achievement of his Christian chiliastic aspirations.[57] In the early 20th century, similar attempts to use science to serve a religious understanding of the world were displayed in the work of major scientists such as Konstantin Tsiolkovsky, the 'grand-father' of the Soviet space programme, or Vladimir Vernadsky, the founder of geochemistry.[58] It is

precisely on these precedents that Prokhanov built his own worldview in the 1970s, while a major revival of the interest in cosmism took place among certain groups of the Soviet elite. Prokhanov was personally acquainted with Svetlana Semenova,[59] a literary scholar who took the lead of a group of scientists and social sciences intellectuals to discuss and popularize the work of Fedorov.[60] As Prokhanov later recalled:

> I began my conscious activity during the Soviet period [...], at a time when the teachings of Nikolai Fedorov started to spread. I found out about his teaching very early. I read the *Philosophy of the Common Task*. I met with the *Fedorovtsy* [Fedorovites]. Fedorov made a huge impression on me. He has highly influenced me to this day, just like the entire Russian cosmist movement.[61]

While censorship prevented the publication of Fedorov's integral work until the end of the 1980s, selected excerpts appeared in an anthology on Russian social utopia in the Komsomol's newspaper, *Molodaia Gvardiia*, in 1979.[62] In his aforementioned article 'The Metaphor of Modernity', Prokhanov could therefore refer to the cosmist thinkers Nikolai Fedorov and Vladimir Vernadsky, and claim consistency with their ideas:

> The spirit breathes where it wants! People always knew about that. Those who painfully experienced the cultural divide of Russia, who looked for ways to unify the extremes, to spiritualize and not to reject the machine, knew this. Fedorov knew this, when he tried to build a huge spiritual teaching based on science and space technology. Vernadsky knew this, when he connected humanity, cosmos and technology under the crystal dome of the noosphere.[63]

Interest in cosmism in the 1970s came from two apparently antagonistic segments of the Soviet elite: on the one hand, the intellectual elite was pressing for the publication of Fedorov's work with the aim of breaking through the official Soviet canon of philosophy.[64] On the other hand, the organization of conferences and readings of Fedorov also involved members of the State security system and the propaganda apparatus.[65] Prokhanov's enthusiasm for cosmist ideas lay precisely at the intersection of these groups' aspirations. He shared the intellectual dissidence's interest in the rediscovery of non-Marxist Russian philosophy. However, at the same time, he remained a champion of Soviet power and a writer officially acclaimed by the authorities.[66] Prokhanov thereby also shared the interest of state officials who, in the context of Brezhnev's stagnation, sought to transform and revitalize the Soviet ideology with new ideological resources. While he promoted heterodox cosmist references, he meant to use them to strengthen what he perceived as a 'decrepit'[67] state ideology and re-orient it towards 'the strategic direction of the Russian cosmic idea'.[68]

> My mission was to spiritualize technology, to spiritualize the Soviet 'technosphere'. [...] I was constantly depressed that [scientists'] fascination for space and rockets left aside the question of the deep nature of Russian cosmism, that they did not know anything about Nikolai Fedorov. [...] They were wonderful people, but they were only engaged in the military and technical aspects of space, not its spiritual one.[69]

While Prokhanov was isolated in the conservative cultural field in the 1970s for his ambivalent style and position as a non-conformist loyalist, he became one of the key leaders of the anti-liberal political opposition to Gorbachev's regime at the end of the 1980s.

3. The re-organization of the conservative ideological space under Prokhanov's leadership (1985-2000)

3.1. Prokhanov as the leading organizer of the anti-liberal opposition (1987-1991)

By the end of the 1980s, like other intellectuals, Prokhanov shifted the focus of his activities from cultural production to political activism. He became one of the main organizers and leaders of the anti-liberal opposition to Gorbachev's regime by playing a key intermediary role between conservative intellectuals and anti-liberal members of the political and military establishment. Both groups were opposed to Gorbachev's attempts to liberalize the country and advocated the defence of a strong state and the interests of the 'Russian people'.[70] This newly framed ideological coalition reshuffled the 'hierarchy of values'[71] within the conservative worldview: the nationalistic promotion of Russian identity gained pre-eminence over attitudes towards technological modernization. Typically, while Prokhanov was isolated from the conservative cultural field in the 1970s, his perception among conservatives shifted dramatically in the late 1980s. As an illustration of these newly established connections between Prokhanov and conservative anti-communists, it is worth mentioning how Iurii Mamleev, Prokhanov's friend from the esotericist 'Iuzhinskii Circle' of the 1960s, could convince Aleksandr Dugin, who was at the time close to the extreme-right monarchist and Orthodox movement 'Pamiat' that 'Prokhanov is one of us'.[72] Similarly, the dividing line over the issue of technology, which separated Prokhanov's staunch modernism from anti-modern conservative writers, progressively dissolved. This was visible when, in 1990, the village prose writer Valentin Rasputin, a famous critic of technological modernization and an environmental activist, stood in the same group with Prokhanov as signatories of the 'Letter of the Seventy-Four', a public manifesto that denounced what they perceived as the domination of 'Russophobia' in the Soviet mass media.[73]

Prokhanov regards the publication of his article 'The Tragedy of Centralism' in *Literaturnaia Gazeta* in 1990 as the founding episode that made him evolve from a solitary position in the literary field to a leading position within the anti-liberal opposition:

> When I published this article, everything changed dramatically. 'Trifonians' and liberals suddenly turned me into a monster, began to demonize and destroy me. But patriots and statists [*gosudarstvenniki*], whom I hardly ever greeted before, suddenly gathered around me with a generous round of applause.[74]

In 'The Tragedy of Centralism', Prokhanov deplored the 'destruction of centralism and with it, that of the state' as a result of the 'extermination' of ideology, the weakening of the administrative command system, the 'destruction of the army' and the division of the party.[75] Building on the 'recognition'[76] he had gained among patriotic and conservative milieus, Prokhanov turned his article into the founding manifesto of an independent newspaper, *Den (Day)*, which he created in 1990 to provide a rallying point for the anti-liberal 'spiritual opposition'.[77]

The ideological range of this coalition spread from 'communist ideologists and radicals' to monarchist and Orthodox patriots and nationalists. On top of its capacity to assemble such an eclectic group of ideologues, the coalition extended beyond the literary and cultural fields to include also actors in the political and military fields. As was

reported by Walter Laqueur, Prokhanov has received outright support from the army for the foundation of his newspaper,[78] probably building on the connections with the military he had acquired during his career as a war correspondent.

He explicitly spelled out his ideological affinity with the conservative faction of the army by being one of the signatories and the reputed author of the manifesto 'A Word to the People', published in July 1991. This open letter called on the people to mobilize against the collapse of the Soviet Union and thereby provided support and justification for the *coup d'état* that followed a month later and was orchestrated by high-level military officials against Gorbachev.[79] Prokhanov has since then willingly assumed the title of the 'main ideologist of the coup'.[80]

3.2. Prokhanov's newspaper: a conservative bastion in the fringes of the post-Soviet public sphere

While the anti-liberal reaction failed to prevent the eventual collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991, a group of anti-Yeltsin conservative and communist deputies retained a majority in Parliament until October 1993. However, after the parliament's attempt to impeach the President in October 1993 was halted by military means, the main strongholds of the anti-liberal opposition, including Prokhanov's newspaper *Den*, were banned by the regime. Prokhanov was quick to found another newspaper, *Zavtra (Tomorrow)*, which still enjoyed a significant circulation of around 100,000 issues. In the early 1990s, *Zavtra's* major contributors represented the same mixture of ideological worldviews that were characteristic of Prokhanov's eclecticism. It included the leader of the Russian Communist Party, Gennady Zyuganov, the ideologue of mystical neo-communism Sergei Kurginyan,[81] traditionalists such as Geidar Djemal and Aleksandr Dugin, national-Bolsheviks such as Edward Limonov and Orthodox nationalists such as father Dmitri Dudko. The newspaper was widely designated as fascist and 'red-brown',[82] and faced several attempts by the regime to close it down, suing it for its publication of extremist, racist, anti-Semite and Stalinist contents.[83] Prokhanov entered a period of marginalization from the legitimate political and cultural scenes that he refers to as the 'catacombs':

> After 1990, I went through a catacomb period. I was squeezed out of culture. I was squeezed out of bookshelves. I thought that I would never return to culture as a writer. It seemed to me that I condemned myself to a secluded, drowsy loneliness.[84]

Moreover, the coalition of ideologues represented by *Zavtra* was rather more situational than axiological: it unified the 'losers' of an empire – 'the Red empire', the 'White empire' – against a 'common enemy, the victorious liberals'.[85] By the mid-1990s, the coalition disintegrated into different groups gathered around the major leaders – Aleksandr Dugin, Edward Limonov and Sergei Kurgynian – with different strategies to engage with the public sphere.[86]

However, through his role as one of the key organizers of the anti-liberal political opposition, Prokhanov had acquired unique leadership capacities and charismatic authority in conservative milieus. Once these skills as an ideological entrepreneur[87] were paired with a change in the political and cultural context brought by Vladimir Putin's presidency, Prokhanov has been able to recover public visibility and legitimacy for his ideas.

4. Rehabilitation, dissemination and co-optation of Prokhanov's discourse: from the margins to the heights of the public sphere (2000s)

4.1. Prokhanov's public rehabilitation as a 'cool dinosaur' and a 'new wave' writer

Prokhanov first regained access to the legitimate public sphere through his literary work. In 2002, the alternative and left-wing publishing house *Ad Marginem* decided to publish his latest novel, *Gospodin Geksogen (Mister Hexogen)*, which recounts, in an occult, utopian and fantastic scenery, the 1999 Russian apartment bombings as a conspiracy orchestrated by the Security Service with the aim to bring the 'Chosen One' (read Vladimir Putin) to power.[88] Since its foundation in 1993, *Ad Marginem* had built up its reputation as an intellectual and progressive institution, famous for having published the post-modern writer Vladimir Sorokin and the first Russian language editions of works by Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze.[89] Their decision to publish Prokhanov's novel, which displayed blunt racist, anti-Semitic and neo-Stalinist overtones, came as a major surprise in the field of publishing.[90] In an interview with *Zavtra* in May 2002, Aleksandr Ivanov, the director of the publishing house, qualified this as a 'serious strategic choice' and argued that Prokhanov's prose 'undoubtedly' belonged to a literary 'new wave' by being both 'hyper-Soviet' and 'futuristic'.[91]

Shortly after its publication, *Mister Hexogen* received the 2002 National Bestseller Price, which was created in 2001 by an editor and a literary critic. The prestige and massive circulation enjoyed by the novel propelled Prokhanov to the heights of the canon of post-Soviet literature and insured his rehabilitation as a legitimate and popular author. As Prokhanov puts it:

> After the novel 'Mr Hexogen' I broke into the operational space. People started calling me 'Mr Hexogen'. After that, indeed, literary fame came to me to a certain extent. I received prizes, became fashionable. Young people, magazines like Playboy, Rolling Stone became interested in me and I read there about myself that Prokhanov is a cool dinosaur.[92]

Prokhanov's recovered popularity arguably fitted a broader context of the dissemination of conservative values.[93] However, his specific literary technology, which uses a metaphorical and flowery language to aestheticize and normalize extremist worldviews, was also arguably one of the triggers of this diffusion.

The publication of Prokhanov's biography in 2007 by Lev Danilkin, a journalist and literary critic born in 1974, illustrates the change of his perception by the younger generation of intellectuals trained in post-Soviet Russia.[94] In the prologue, Danilkin explained how the eccentric character of Prokhanov inspired in him mixed feelings of rejection and fascination:

> Like 'everyone', deep down, I related to the novelist Prokhanov with deep scepticism. [...] At the same time, in a paradoxical way, he inspired a feeling of sympathy [...]. In Russia, there are not that many characters which are one hundred per cent eligible for the world catalogue of eccentrics of all times and nations. Prokhanov belongs to it without a doubt.[95]

Dmitri Olshanskii (born in 1978), also a journalist and literary critic, provides a more radical instance of a shift of ideological convictions partly inspired by Prokhanov's example. In a 2002 article untitled 'How I became a Black-Hundred', Olshanskii rejected

his former 'liberal' views and adherence to the 'canons of the 1990s'.[96] Judging them 'incompatible with good literature', he referred instead to Prokhanov's accession to the National Bestseller Price as the sign that 'time has come for the recognition of violent, incorrect and nationally-minded authors'.[97] Similarly, when the National-Bolshevik writer Zakhar Prilepin also received the National Bestseller Price in 2011, he identified the publication of Prokhanov's novel *Mr Hexogen* as a turning point that gave anti-liberal writers access to the literary scene:

> *[Mr. Hexogen]* 'cracked' the literary situation. At that time, literature was dominated by the liberal public opinion, which did not let 'rascals' like me into the bookshelves. Thanks to Prokhanov, I [...] and other writers with left-wing views, were handed the keys to literature.[98]

While Prokhanov's figure and ideas were rehabilitated as a new alternative counter-culture on the literary scene, his position in the political field also significantly evolved from extremist opponent to pro-regime ideologue with close ties to the political establishment.

4.2. Prokhanov's pro-regime evolution: a useful ideological resource for autocratic legitimation

Already in 2001, Prokhanov positively perceived Putin's presidency as an attempt to build 'a new imperial centralism'.[99] Indeed, the beginning of the 2000s was marked by a general effort by the political elite to dissociate themselves from the unpopular heritage of Yeltsin's period. Vladimir Putin's programmatic article for the presidential election, 'Russia at the turn of the millennium' published in December 1999, was one of the first signs of this change of attitudes. Besides its generally liberal economic orientation, Putin devoted the first part of his article to the 'Russian idea'. He mentioned the need to protect the 'primordial, traditional values of Russians', subsequently listing 'patriotism', 'great powerness' (*derzhavnost'*), 'statehood' (*gosudarstvennichestvo*) and social solidarity. This opening to the key themes of the vocabulary of the 1990s anti-liberal opposition came with outreach efforts in their direction. Prokhanov claimed to have been able to reach out to Putin and to meet with him in the summer of 2000.[100]

However, it is only over the course of Putin's second mandate from 2004 to 2008 that Prokhanov's attitude towards the regime significantly evolved towards full support. In the aftermath of the Orange Revolution that broke out in Ukraine in 2004–2005, the Russian regime took major steps towards the consolidation of its authoritarian power, through accelerated centralization and state control over the media and the evolution of the ruling party United Russia towards an explicitly 'conservative' ideological identity.[101] Prokhanov's full support of the regime stemmed from his perception of Putin's rhetoric as growingly consistent with his ideas. His definite appraisal specifically followed Putin's annual address to the Federal Assembly in May 2006[102]:

> The current presidential message seemed surprising to many patriots, to say the least. Putin, whom we all considered a neoliberal, a Westerner, and almost a satellite of the United States, proclaimed a course towards the development and sovereignty of Russia.[103]

Notwithstanding some persisting bones of contention with Putin's regime, Prokhanov couched his new position towards the regime in his novel *The Symphony of the Fifth Empire* published in 2006. According to him,

> Following the four Empires that arose here (the first - Kievan Rus, the second - Muskovii, the third - Petrovskii-Romanovian, the fourth – Stalin's project) - the Fifth began to arise.[104]

Prokhanov views Putin as the providential leader who will restore Russia to an empire and positions himself as its ideological prophet and architect:

> This project of the Fifth Empire - as I call it - I want to see it, I want to fix it. I want to bring it into a field where it could be cherished and comprehended. [...] I foresee it. As the poets foresaw the revolution. As Bloch foresaw it.[105]

4.3. Dissemination, institutionalization and co-optation of Prokhanov's discourse in the public sphere

As a pro-regime ideologue, Prokhanov has been increasingly given access to the mass media to circulate his ideas. He started appearing as a regular guest on Vladimir Solovev's pro-governmental socio-political TV talk shows, first on NTV channel from 2003 to 2009 and, from 2010 onwards, on the state TV channel 'Rossiia-1'. As of 2009, Prokhanov also became a regular guest on the radio station 'Russkaia Sluzhba Novostei'. In 2007, he was even offered a seat as a permanent guest in the weekly emission 'Special opinion' of the liberally oriented radio station 'Ekho Moskvy'.

Prokhanov's new media reputation matched a visible change of attitude of the ruling elite towards his ideas. His 2007 personal interview with Sergei Kirienko, who was at the time the general director of the state nuclear energy corporation Rosatom, is a case in point. While Prokhanov used to publish incendiary op-eds against Kirienko when the latter was the Prime Minister in 1998,[106] their discussion in 2007 revealed the elasticity of the ideological spectrum that Prokhanov was able to frequent by that time. What is more, it illustrated Kirienko's unprecedented positive change of attitude towards Prokhanov's views. When Prokhanov posited that:

> Philosophy, aesthetic, design, culture, futurology, the image of the future, a new sociality [...] should come into contact with technology. In the Soviet times, after the twenties and thirties, the technocratic culture collapsed.
> [...]. They could have got in touch with the machine, spiritualize it, poeticize it, bring divine meaning into it. What is needed is an intellectual centre, a 'factory of meanings', which would be located somewhere near the reactors. [...] Have you thought about this?[107]

Kirienko approved:

> We can be partners, and we must be partners in this process. You mentioned the machine and God. Until recently, it seemed to me that these concepts were incompatible. [...] And a great revelation for me was the realization that this was not at all the case. [...] It is no coincidence that the Federal Nuclear Centre is located in Sarov, and Seraphim Sarovskii is the patron of the nuclear industry. [...] The line between matter and God is very thin. [...] I was wrong when I believed that they are two different worlds. Everything you said about the humanitarian, spiritual component is fair.[108]

What is more, Kirienko turned himself into an advocate of a syncretic vision of technology and spirituality and obtained the Russian Orthodox Church's support to promote these views. In 2012, Kirienko and the Patriarch Kirill inaugurated a 'scientific and spiritual centre' in Sarov, with the aim to bring together scientists, representatives of the Church, academics and politicians to discuss the interaction between science, technology and religion.[109]

Prokhanov has also been able to perform and inscribe his ideas onto the Russian territory concretely. In 2007, he put forward the idea to build a 'Sacred Hill' out of earth fragments brought from all over Russia. The 'Sacred Hill' was meant to represent the reunification of Russia's 'torn history'.[110] Significantly, Prokhanov chose to build the Hill near one of the most important cities of his youth, Pskov, and claimed that the city should 'become the spiritual centre of Russia'. He also insisted that this project was itself a performance of the synthesis of spirituality and technology since it placed an Orthodox cross on top of the hill, which was 'created using the latest technology'.[111] Throughout the realization of this project, Prokhanov displayed his ability to get support from key personalities from the military, political, religious, cultural and academic sectors.[112] Representatives of the local branch of the ruling party 'United Russia' reportedly provided financial and organizational help.[113] The inauguration ceremony of the 'Sacred Hill', attended by Pskov's administrative authorities and blessed by the regional bishop, legitimized Prokhanov's claim over the definition of the Russian identity and its inscription on the territory.[114]

Following on this initiative, Prokhanov obtained further support from the political authorities to disseminate and institutionalize his ideas in 2012, when he founded an organization of patriotic and imperialist ideologues, the Izborskii Club.[115] The aim of the Club is to provide an 'ideology for the authorities'.[116] It was officially created on the 1150th anniversary day of the fortress-city of Izborsk, just next to Prokhanov's 'Sacred Hill', thereby building on his past initiative and long special relationship with the region of Pskov. With about fifty full members and forty associated experts, the Club gathers key conservative figures, including writers, journalists, economists, scientists, military and religious people.[117]

The foundation of the Izborskii Club received outright endorsement from the political establishment. Andrei Turchak, who was at the time the governor of the region of Pskov and later on became the Secretary General of the ruling party 'United Russia', reportedly played a 'significant role' in the creation of the Club.[118] Along with him, the Minister of culture Vladimir Medinskii took part in the inaugurating ceremony of the Club.[119] Furthermore, over the eight years of its operation, the Club has received significant funding from the presidential administration.[120] Political support for the Club was also paired with the personal co-optation of its members and allies to official positions. Typically, Prokhanov became deputy chairman of the Public Council working under the Ministry of Defence and was nominated by a presidential decree to serve on the Council on Public Television.[121]

The co-optation of Prokhanov's ideas by political authorities stems both from Prokhanov's capacities as an ideological entrepreneur and from the evolution of the regime's strategy towards the management of right-wing patriotic extremism. First, Prokhanov proved a champion of the pro-Putin patriotic forces during the winter of 2011–2012. While massive demonstrations took to the streets to protest against the

corruption of the 2011 parliamentary elections, Prokhanov was one the leaders of the counter-manifestations that went under the name 'anti-orange coalition' in reference to the 2004 Ukrainian Orange Revolution. Prokhanov's loyalist alignment with the Kremlin stands in contrast to other nationalist ideologues and activists who participated in the anti-regime demonstrations.[122] While Prokhanov has arguably maintained a substantially consistent discourse over the period since the early 1990s, he has shifted his strategy of engagement with the regime. He has moved from opposition to the regime to a legitimation discourse, which seeks to seize greater hegemony within the public sphere and the ruling elites.

On the other hand, the regime has made room for the dissemination of Prokhanov's discourse, benefiting from his supply of pro-Kremlin discourse broadcasted on the mass media. The strategic utility of ideological resources providing autocratic legitimacy has only been furthered by the growing unpopularity of the presidential party United Russia and the street mobilizations against the regime's control over the elections.

5. From an individual to a group's ideology: Prokhanov's reactionary modernism turned mainstream

5.1. Reactionary modernism: a new commonplace in conservative milieus

By the end of the 2000s, Prokhanov had resumed the position he held during Soviet times as a propagandist of a state ideology blending spiritual conservative values with the power of technological modernity. In his theory about the restoration of the Russian 'Fifth Empire', he claimed that the new 'imperial style' would combine 'the technocratism of the 21st century and a mystical, religious consciousness'.[123]

While in the Soviet Union, Prokhanov's modernist credo was iconoclastic among conservative circles, it has become mainstream among contemporary Russian conservative ideologues. The integration of technological modernization into a patriotic and conservative national ideology has been a central concern for a younger generation of conservative ideologues, approximately born in the 1970s. While some of its representatives have sought to develop a more respectable 'young conservatism', purposely opposing what they perceive as Prokhanov's 'old-style patriotism', others explicitly converge with and build on Prokhanov's worldviews.[124] For instance, the programme of one of the major conservative collective manifestos, the 'Russian Doctrine', written in 2005 by Vitalii Averianov (born 1973), Andrei Kobiakov (born 1961) and Maksim Kalashnikov (born 1966) with contributions from about forty other experts,[125] was put forward as a 'project of modernization of Russia on the basis of spiritual and moral values and conservative ideology'.[126] Vitalii Averianov has coined the expression 'dynamic conservatism' to describe the doctrine's ideology, which advocates the transformation of Russia into a 'centaur from Orthodoxy and the economy of innovation, from high spirituality and high technology', governed by an 'authoritarian and imperial' ruling class.[127] As mentioned in the introduction, Prokhanov took over Averianov's formula, 'dynamic conservatism', to describe his own worldview. Beyond their ideological proximity, Prokhanov and Averianov have also joined forces and resources in 2012, when Averianov merged his organization, the Institute for Dynamic Conservatism, with Prokhanov's Izborskii Club. In addition to Vitalii Averianov, seven other leading figures

of the younger generation of conservative thinkers have joined the Izborskii Club, thereby demonstrating Prokhanov's ability to ally resources and personalities beyond the generational gap.[128]

Promoted at the Izborskii Club, reactionary modernism has become the core programme of the largest group of conservative ideologues in today's Russia.[129] While the Club also includes self-proclaimed 'traditionalist' thinkers such as Aleksandr Dugin and his follower Valerii Korovin, their membership in the Club demonstrates their readiness to cooperate with Prokhanov's staunch modernism, to the extent that it serves the regeneration of Russia as an imperial great power in confrontation with the West. During an Izborskii Club roundtable discussion in March 2019, Valerii Korovin spelled out this reformed traditionalism:

> We have to separate the scientific and technical modernization and the social one. There is a formula that Samuel Huntington introduced - "Modernisation without Westernisation". Russia is developing scientific and technical progress! Our scientists are the best in the world. They create breakthrough technologies. With this, we achieve modernization while rejecting all Western sophistications in the field of human experiments. That is - no liberalism, no Western values, no dehumanization, no mutants, clones and cyborgs!'[130]

5.2. Reactionary modernism: a conceptual and contextual ideological arrangement

The domination, overtime, of Prokhanov's modernist conservatism over anti-modern conservatism can be attributed to different factors.

First, from a conceptual perspective, the decontestation of modernity among Russian conservatives can be partly explained by the evolution of modernity's conceptual meaning throughout the period. Izborskii ideologues denounce what they qualify as 'myths and cults of the neoliberal era', such as the 'myth of post-industrialism', 'state's withdrawal from the social sphere' or 'multiculturalism'.[131] On the contrary, they refer to Stalin as a paramount model of a successful modernizing ruler.[132] While they reject the social and cultural changes that they associate with a Western and liberal understanding of modernity, they praise industrial and technological modernity to the extent that it contributed to the growth of the state's power and the reinforcement of the collective mobilization of the people. Izborskii ideologues therefore fit with what Michael Minkenberg analysed as a phase of renewal of the radical right at the turn of the 21st century. Accordingly, the radical right is not so much characterized by a rejection of modernity but rather by an effort to 'undo' the social change associated with modernity, understood as the autonomy of the individual and the functional differentiation of the society.[133]

Second, from a contextual perspective, two important factors have weighed in the modernist evolution of the conservative canon throughout the post-Soviet period.

Domestically, as we have explained above, this is partly a legacy of the structure of ideological cleavages inherited from the end of the 1980s. The anti-liberal coalition of 'patriotic' forces against Gorbachev and its inter-sectorial character, through which intellectuals were involved in political activities alongside political and military actors, have resulted in the downplaying of the former opposition between techno-critique conservatives and state patriots' techno-enthusiasm. Later, throughout the 2000s, the

structure of this ideological cleavage has persisted as 'liberals' have maintained their leadership over the regime's economic and technological policies. While they felt they were gaining ground on the cultural and foreign policies' agenda, conservatives developed their own vision of economic and technological modernization in order to confront the major stronghold of their opponents.

Outside Russian domestic politics, the influence of China has significantly weighed as a living example of a successful 'modernization without westernization'. Izborskii Club members have frequently voiced their admiration for China's definition of a national idea, in which they see a 'synthesis of conservatism and progressivism', combining the 'values of socialism and Confucianism', 'the avant-garde communist project' and 'the fundamental imperial foundations'.[134]

6. Conclusion

While Prokhanov has never directly engaged with electoral or party politics, he provides an interesting case of an ideologue trying to do 'politics by culture'.[135] He has developed the skills and resources of an ideological entrepreneur who has been able to acquire leadership capacity, charismatic authority and visibility on the public sphere. He has successfully discharged two major moves. First, by the end of the 1980s, he was able to evolve from an isolated position among conservative milieus to a leading position as the organizer of the conservative reaction against liberal reforms. Under Prokhanov's leadership and in the context of rising great power ambitions, the canon of Russian conservatism was reshuffled in favour of the dominance, over time, of reactionary modernism over anti-modern *passéisme*.

Second, Prokhanov has managed to evolve from the position of a fringe ideologue excluded from the legitimate public sphere in the 1990s to a public figure whose ideas have spread on state mass media and have been co-opted by political authorities since the late 2000s. His discourse, which uses a variety of genres – from journalism to fantastic fiction – has been able to infuse popular culture and official political rhetoric. His stylistically and conceptually eclectic ideological production provides a case for the study of political ideas that are not formulated and circulated through an organized analytical discourse, but rather through a pervasive aesthetic imaginary.

The institutionalization and dissemination of Prokhanov's ideas in today's Russia fulfil Bourdieu's criteria of defining a complete ideology by its ability to circulate on the 'market for symbolic goods'.[136] Prokhanov's reactionary modernism is able to compete with liberal secular visions of technological modernity on both the cultural and political scenes. Promoted by the group of ideologues gathered at the Izborskii Club, reactionary modernism is branded as a strategic ideology for Russia's development as a great power. As the Club enjoys significant financial and human resources as well as access to an international network of fellow conservative ideologues and policymakers overseas, their programme represents a serious challenge to liberal modernization theories and deserves detailed scrutiny on its circulation and reception.

Notes

1. This article uses the transcription system Passport 2013 ICAO to transliterate Russian except for surnames conventionnaly transcribed otherwise (e.g. Konstantin Tsiolkovsky).
2. 'V Gosudarstvennoi Dume Predstavili Dokumentalknii Film "Narod Mechty"', *Website of the State Duma of the Russian Federation* (2019): http://duma.gov.ru/news/45809/. All translations from Russian are mine.
3. 'V Poiskakh Russkoi Mechty. Gorst Zemli.', *Izborskii Klub* (2018): https://izborsk-club.ru/15849.
4. A. Prokhanov, 'Putin – Russkii Mechtatel', *Izborskii Klub* (2019): https://izborsk-club.ru/16446.
5. Quoted in Dmitrii Melnikov, '"Valdai" na beregakh Nevy', *Vesti.ru* (2012): https://www.vesti.ru/doc.html?id=944192&cid=6
6. E. Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2009).
7. As famously articulated in F. Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York : Toronto : New York: Free Press ; Maxwell Macmillan Canada ; Maxwell Macmillan International, 1992); A similar technological determinism conducive to the convergence of societies towards liberal frameworks was also voiced by Daniel Bell in D. Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting* (New York: Basic Books, 1973); and D. Bell, *The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties: With a New Afterword* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1988).
8. S. Gerovitch, *From Newspeak to Cyberspeak: A History of Soviet Cybernetics* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2002); and E. Rindzevičiūtė, *The Power of Systems: How Policy Sciences Opened up the Cold War World* (Ithaca ; London: Cornell University Press, 2016).
9. This argument is developed by Richard Sakwa. See R. Sakwa, 'Modernisation, Neo-Modernisation, and Comparative Democratisation in Russia', *East European Politics*, 28(1) (2012), p. 49.
10. See for instance Sergei Kurginyan's 'mystical neo-communism'. M. Epstein, *The Phoenix of Philosophy: Russian Thought of the Late Soviet Period* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019).
11. See, among others: A. Yanov, *The Russian New Right: Right-Wing Ideologies in Contemporary USSR* (Berkeley: University of California, 1978); W. Laqueur, *Black Hundred. The Rise of the Extreme right in Russia* (New York: HarperCollins, 1994); Y. Brudny, *Reinventing Russia: Russian Nationalism and the Soviet State, 1953–1991*, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1998); N. Mitrokhin, *Russkaia Partiia: Dvizhenie Russkikh Nastionalisatov v SSSR. 1953–1985 gody*, (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2003); S. Prozorov, 'Russian conservatism in the Putin Presidency: the dispersion of a hegemonic discourse', *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 10(2) (2005), pp. 121–143; M. Engström, 'Contemporary Russian messianism and new Russian foreign policy', *Contemporary Security* Policy, 35(3) (2014), pp. 356–379; K. Bluhm and M. Varga (Eds.) *New Conservatives in Russia and East Central Europe* (Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY: Routledge, 2019); and M. Laruelle, *Russian Nationalism: Imaginaries, Doctrines, and Political Battlefields* (London; New York: Routledge, 2019).
12. The list of distinct studies on Dugin includes, among others: D. Shlapentokh, 'Aleksandr Dugin's views of Russian history: collapse and revival', *Journal of Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe*, 25(3) (2017), pp. 331–43; D. Shlapentokh, 'The great friendship: geopolitical fantasies about the Russia/Europe alliance in the early Putin era (2000–2008) – the case of Aleksandr Dugin', *Debatte: Journal of Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe*, 22(1) (2014), pp. 49–79; A. Shekhovtsov and A. Umland, 'Is Aleksandr Dugin a traditionalist? "neo-Eurasianism" and perennial Philosophy', *The Russian Review*, 68(4) (2009), pp. 662–78; A. Shekhovtsov, 'The palingenetic thrust of Russian neo-Eurasianism: ideas of rebirth in Aleksandr Dugin's Worldview', *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, 9(4) (2008), pp. 491–506; M. Laruelle, 'Aleksandr Dugin: a Russian version of the European

radical right?', *Kennan Institute Occasional Papers*, 294 (2006); J. Kipp, 'Aleksandr Dugin and the ideology of national revival: geopolitics, Eurasianism and the conservative revolution', *European Security*, 11(3) (2002), pp. 91–125; and J. Dunlop, 'Aleksandr Dugin's "neo-Eurasian" textbook and Dmitrii Trenin's ambivalent response', *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, 25(1/2) (2001), pp. 91–127.

13. R. J. Marsh, *Literature, History and Identity in Post-Soviet Russia, 1991–2006* (Oxford; New York: Peter Lang, 2007); M. Lipovetsky and L. R. Wakamiya (Eds.), *Late and Post-Soviet Russian Literature: A Reader* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2014); K. Livers, 'The Tower or the Labyrinth: Conspiracy, Occult, and Empire-Nostalgia in the Work of Viktor Pelevin and Aleksandr Prokhanov', *The Russian Review* 69(3) (2010), pp. 477–503; B. Noordenbos, 'Ironic Imperialism: How Russian Patriots Are Reclaiming Postmodernism', *Studies in East European Thought* 63(2) (2011), pp. 147–58; E. Clowes, 'Provinces, Piety, and Promotional Putinism: Mapping Aleksandr Prokhanov's Counter-Utopian Russia", in M. Suslov and P-A Bodin (Eds) *The Post-Soviet Politics of Utopia: Language, Fiction and Fantasy in Modern Russia* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2019).
14. L. Danilkin, *Chelovek s Iaitsom, Zhizn i Mnenie Aleksandra Prokhanova* (Moscow: Ad Marginem, 2007); and E. Griffiths, *Aleksandr Prokhanov and Post-Soviet Esotericism*, D. Phil., (University of Oxford, 2007).
15. A. Prokhanov, G. Zhivotov, and E. Nefedov, *Slovo, Pronesennoe Skvoz Ad* (Moscow: ITRK, 1999).
16. See Prokhanov's author page on https://izborsk-club.ru/author/prohanov.
17. L. Danilkin, *Chelovek s Iaitsom, op. cit*., Ref. 14.
18. P. Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), p. 187.
19. Q. Skinner, *Visions of Politics. Volume 1: Regarding Method* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
20. C. Camic and N. Gross, 'The New Sociology of Ideas', in J. R. Blau (Ed.), *The Blackwell Companion to Sociology* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2004), pp. 236–49; see also a similar attempt by French scholars: C. Gaboriaux and A. Skornicki (Eds.), *Vers Une Histoire Sociale Des Idées Politiques*, (Villeneuve-d'Ascq, France: Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 2017).
21. M. Freeden, 'Ideologies and conceptual history', *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 2(1) (1997), pp. 4–5.
22. On how 'ideologies possess the crucial function of decontesting essentially contested meanings', see M. Freeden, 'Confronting the chimera of a "post-ideological" age', *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, 8(2) (2005), pp. 255.
23. See A. Prokhanov's TV interview with the journalist Vladimir Pozner, *Efir 1* (2010): https://www.1tv.ru/shows/pozner/vypuski/gost-aleksandr-prohanov-pozner-vypusk-ot-18-05-2010?start=0
24. This expression is borrowed from Yitzakh Brudny, who applied it to describe the strategy of Russian nationalists in the Soviet Union in the years 1953–1964 and 1985–1989. See Brudny, *Reinventing Russia, op. cit*., Ref. 11.
25. Z. Sternhell, *The Anti-Enlightenment Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).
26. J. Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
27. A. Prokhanov, 'Baptisty – Ochen Tikhii, Krotkii Narod, Tam Net Nikakikh Enteo', *Izborskii Klub* (2017): https://izborsk-club.ru/13904.
28. V. Popov, 'Sibirskaya Utopiia Baptistov', *Nezavisimaia Gazeta* (2010): http://www.ng.ru/ng_religii/2010-10-20/7_sibir.html.
29. Prokhanov, 'Baptisty – Ochen Tikhii, Krotkii Narod, Tam Net Nikakikh Enteo', *op. cit*., Ref. 27.
30. See for instance Aleksandr Prokhanov's theory of the 'Fifth Empire', which strives to establish a fusion of Russia's Orthodox and Soviet heritages. A. Prokhanov, *Simfoniia 'Piatoy imperii'* (Moscow: Eksmo, 2007).

31. See for instance B. Slutskii, 'Fiziki i liriki', *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, 13 October 1959.
32. Danilkin, *Chelovek s Iaitsom, op. cit*., Ref. 14, p. 67–70.
33. A. Prokhanov, Personal interview with the author (2019).
34. See A. Prokhanov, 'Liubit Narod, Boiatsia Boga', *Zavtra* (2012): http://zavtra.ru/blogs/lyubit-narod-boyatsya-boga.
35. A. Prokhanov, 'Khozhdenie v Ogon', *Zavtra* (2011): http://zavtra.ru/blogs/hozhdenie-v-ogon.
36. Danilkin, *Chelovek s Iaitsom, op. cit*., Ref. 14, p.153.
37. Danilkin, *ibid.*, p. 140.
38. M. Laruelle, 'The Iuzhinskii Circle: far-right metaphysics in the Soviet underground and its legacy today', *The Russian Review*, 74 (2015), pp. 563–80.
39. A. Prokhanov, 'Umer Glavnii "Metafizicheskii Realist"', *Izborskii Klub* (2015): https://izborsk-club.ru/7534.
40. Danilkin, *Chelovek s Iaitsom, op. cit*., Ref. 14, p. 258.
41. Prokhanov, 'Khozhdenie v Ogon', *op. cit*., Ref. 35.
42. Prokhanov, *ibid*.
43. Prokhanov, *ibid*.
44. Y. Brudny, *Reinventing Russia, op. cit*., Ref. 11, p. 46.
45. According to Prokhanov, the literary critic Alla Latynina gave him this surname. See Prokhanov's interview with Elena Kalashnikova, 'Ia Khochu Okropit Svoimi Knigami Pervuiu Polovinu 21 Veka', *Russkii Zhurnal* (2002): http://old.russ.ru/krug/20020529_prox.html.
46. A. Prokhanov, 'Metafora Sovremennosti', *Literaturnaia Gazeta*, 37 (1979).
47. The editors wrote: 'It seems that the article by A. Prokhanov, which opens the discussion, will cause many readers both disagreement and well-founded objections. That is perhaps natural in order to begin the discussion. Not all the provisions and conclusions of the author seem convincing to the editors.' See Prokhanov, *ibid*.
48. Prokhanov, *ibid*.
49. Brudny, *Reinventing Russia, op. cit*., Ref. 11, p. 157.
50. In a long article, the literary critic Igor Dedkov denounced Prokhanov's style as a 'careless pathos' dismissive of the 'confrontation of man to man'. See I. Dedkov, '"Totalny argumenty" Aleksandra Prokhanova, ili jizhn "po-novomu"', *Literaturnaia Ucheba*, 3 (1980), reproduced at https://ru-prokhanov.livejournal.com/110015.html
51. A. Prokhanov, 'Ne Oshibitsia v Diagnoze', *Literaturnaia Ucheba*, 3 (1980), reproduced at: https://ru-prokhanov.livejournal.com/109805.html.
52. Prokhanov, *ibid*.
53. Herf, *Reactionary Modernism, op. cit*., Ref. 26.
54. Herf, *ibid.*, p. 2.
55. Herf, *ibid.*, p. 80.
56. G. Young, *The Russian Cosmists: The Esoteric Futurism of Nikolai Fedorov and His Followers* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).
57. B. Knorre, 'Fedorovskoe religiozno-filosofskoe dvizhenie kak primer religioznogo modernizma', *The Russian Review*, 10 (2006).
58. M. Hagemeister, 'Russian cosmism in the 1920s and today', in B. Rosenthal (Ed) *The Occult in Russian and Soviet Culture* (Ithaca ; New York: Cornell University Press, 2007), pp. 185–186; See also M. Laruelle, 'Totalitarian utopia, the occult, and technological modernity in Russia : The intellectual experience of cosmism', in B. Menzel, M. Hagemeister, B. Rosenthal (Eds) *The New Age of Russia. Occult and Esoteric Dimensions* (Munich; Berlin: Peter Lang Gmbh, 2012), pp. 238–258.
59. Prokhanov, Personal interview with the author, *op. cit*., Ref. 33.
60. See M. Hagemeister, 'Le "Cosmisme Russe", "Philosophie de l'Avenir"?', *Slavica Occitania*, 46 (2018), pp. 58–61. Starting from 1978, Semenova organized annual conferences in memory of Fedorov, which took place at the Central House of Writers and at the

Museum of Cosmonautics. See B. Knorre, *V Poiskakh Bessmertiia, Fedorovskoe Religiozno-filosofskoe Dvizhenie: Istoria i Sovremennost* (Moscow: LKI, 2008), p. 62.

61. Prokhanov, 'Khozhdenie v Ogon', *op. cit*., Ref. 35.
62. Hagemeister, 'Le "Cosmisme Russe", "Philosophie de l'avenir"?', *op. cit*., Ref. 60, p. 59.
63. Prokhanov, 'Metafora Sovremennosti', *op. cit*., Ref. 46.
64. Svetlana Semenova reported that the literary critic Vadim Kozhinov, who would later become one the main ideologues of Russian nationalism after the fall of the Soviet Union, was pressing for the publication of Fedorov's work, aiming to 'break through the officially permissible revolutionary democratic canon of Russian philosophy'. See her interview 'Filosofstvovat – znachit uchitsia ne umirat', *Literaturnaia Gazeta*, 10(5879) (2002).
65. See the testimony of an eyewitness of these events, the Orthodox historian of philosophy Nikolai Gavriushin. N. Gavriushin, 'A byl li « russkiy kosmizm » ?', *Voprosy istorii estestvoznaniia i tekhniki*, 3(1993), p. 105. Valerii Baidin, another eyewitness, also testified to the variety of organizers involved in the promotion of Fedorov's ideas, such as the All Russian Society for the Protection of Monuments of History and Culture, a civil society organization that gathered state patriots of diverse affiliations, including both members of the State security system and 'God-seekers'. V. Baidin, *Nepodvizhnoe Stranstvie, Povest-vospominanie*, (Moscow: Vikmo-M, 2018) p. 284.
66. Prokhanov received four Soviet state awards: the Order of the Badge of Honour (1981), Lenin Komsomol Prize (1982), the Order of the Red Banner of Labour (1984) and the Order of Friendship of Peoples (1988).
67. A. Prokhanov, 'My Zhili v Unison s Epokhoi', *Izborskii Klub* (2015): https://izborsk-club.ru/8084.
68. Prokhanov, Personal interview with the author, *op. cit*., Ref. 33.
69. Prokhanov, *ibid*.
70. For a detailed analysis of the arguments and discourse of the anti-liberal opposition, see Y. Brudny, 'The Heralds of Opposition to *Perestroyka*', *Soviet Economy*, 5(2) (1989), pp. 162–200.
71. On the impact of a change in the socio-political context on the creation of a 'new hierarchy of values' within ideological worldviews see Z. Sternhell, 'Fascism: reflections on the fate of ideas in twentieth-century history', in M. Freeden (Ed.) *Reassessing Political Ideologies: The Durability of Dissent* (London ; New York: Rouledge, 2001), pp. 92–115.
72. Danilkin, *Chelovek s Iaitsom, op. cit*., Ref. 14, p. 427.
73. 'Pismo Pisatelei Rossii', *Literaturnaia Rossiia*, 9 (1990).
74. Prokhanov, 'My Zhili v Unison s Epokhoi', *op. cit*., Ref. 67.
75. A. Prokhanov, 'Tragediia Tsentralizma', *Literaturnaia Gazeta* (1990), reproduced at: http://zavtra.ru/blogs/tragediya-tsentralizma.
76. Prokhanov, 'My Zhili v Unison s Epokhoi', *op. cit*., Ref. 67.
77. Prokhanov, *ibid*.
78. Laqueur, *Black Hundred, op. cit*., Ref. 11, p. 139.
79. The 12 signatories of the manifesto included writers such as Iuri Bondarev and Valentin Rasputin and military generals directly involved in the August 1991 coup such as Valentin Varennikov and Aleksandr Tiziakov. See 'Slovo k Narodu', *Sovetskaia Rossiia* (1991), reproduced at: http://zavtra.ru/cgi/veil/data/denlit/050/12.html.
80. Prokhanov, 'Khozhdenie v Ogon', *op. cit*., Ref. 35; He later expanded on his participation in this episode in his novel *The Last Soldier of the Soviet Empire* (1993), see A. Prokhanov, *Poslednii Soldat Imperii. Kremlevskii Apokalipsis* (Moscow: Kovcheg, 1993).
81. On Sergei Kurginyan's 'mystical neo-communism', see M. Epstein, *The Phoenix of Philosophy, op. cit*., Ref. 10, p. 69–75.
82. Prokhanov, 'Khozhdenie v Ogon', *op. cit*., Ref. 35.
83. Danilkin, *Chelovek s Iaitsom, op. cit*., Ref. 14, p. 531.
84. Z. Prilepin, *Imenini Serdtsa: Razgovori s Russkoi Literaraturoi* (Moscow: Astrel, 2009), p. 9.
85. Prokhanov, 'My Zhili v Unison s Epokhoi', *op. cit*., Ref. 67.

86. Sergei Kurgynian tried to engage with businessmen in 1996. Aleksandr Dugin left his former associate Edward Limonov and the National Bolshevik Party in 1998 and served as an advisor to the speaker of the State Duma starting from 1999. Edward Limonov's National-Bolshevik movement remained in the radical revolutionary opposition.
87. My use of the terms 'ideological entrepreneur' is calqued on Howard Becker's 'moral entrepreneur'. See H. Becker, *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance* (New York: Free Press, 1991).
88. For a detailed analysis of Prokhanov's novel, see K. Livers, 'The Tower or the Labyrinth: Conspiracy, Occult, and Empire-Nostalgia in the Work of Viktor Pelevin and Aleksandr Prokhanov', *op. cit*., Ref. 13.
89. 'O Nas', https://admarginem.ru/o-nas/.
90. There have been over a hundred reviews discussing *Mister Hexogene*'s literary and political aspects. There are listed on the website devoted to the novel: https://web.archive.org/web/20060507143508/http://geksogen.ru/recen_1.html
91. 'Kultura Dvizhetsia Vsryvami', *Zavtra* (2002): http://zavtra.ru/blogs/2002-05-2982.
92. Prokhanov, 'Khozhdenie v Ogon', *op. cit*., Ref. 35.
93. S. Prozorov, 'Russian conservatism in the Putin Presidency: the dispersion of a hegemonic discourse', *op. cit*., Ref. 11.
94. Danilkin, *Chelovek s Iaitsom, op. cit*., Ref. 14.
95. Danilkin, *ibid*., p. 12.
96. The Black Hundred was a Russian ultra-nationalist movement formed at the beginning of the 20th century. See D. Olshankii, 'Kak ia stal chernosotentsiem', *Novaia Gazeta* (2002): http://www.ng.ru/ng_exlibris/2002-04-11/2_black.html
97. Olshankii, *ibid*.
98. '"Grekh" Zhalovatsia', *Rossiiskaia Gazeta* (2011): https://rg.ru/2011/06/06/reg-privolzhe/prilepin.html. Here, 'left-wing' is used as an anti-liberal term, identified with the Soviet ideals of etatism, collectivism and economic planning.
99. A. Prokhanov, 'Rossiia – Imperiia Sveta', *Zavtra* (2001): http://zavtra.ru/blogs/2001-06-1211.
100. Prokhanov, together with Valentin Chikin, the editor-in-chief of the journal *Sovietskaia Rossiia*, wrote a letter requesting a meeting to Vladimir Putin, who allegedly accepted. See Danilkin, *Chelovek s Iaitsom, op. cit*., Ref. 14, p. 601.
101. In 2007–2008, United Russia created an ideological discussion club, the 'Russian Club', which held meetings with a number of nationalist and conservative ideologues to discuss the foundations and directions of a 'Russian project'. The ideologues involved in these discussions included Egor Kholmogorov, Konstantin Krylov, Mikhail Remizov and others. At its 11th Congress in 2009, United Russia adopted 'Russian conservatism' as its official ideology.
102. V. Putin, 'Annual Address to the Federal Assembly', *Website of the President of Russia* (2006): http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/23577.
103. A. Prokhanov and S. Glaziev, 'Eto – Nashi Idei', *Zavtra* (2006): http://zavtra.ru/blogs/2006-06-2821.
104. Prokhanov's interview with Zakhar Prilepin, in Z. Prilepin, *Imenini Serdtsa: Razgovori s Russkoi Literaraturoi* (Moscow: Astrel, 2009), p. 12.
105. Prilepin, *ibid*.
106. A. Prokhanov, G. Zhivotov, and E. Nefedov, *Slovo, Pronesennoe Skvoz Ad, op. cit*., Ref. 15, p. 156.
107. A. Prokhanov, 'Rossiia: Atomnii Vektor', *Zavtra* (2007): http://zavtra.ru/blogs/2007-07-1841.
108. Prokhanov, *ibid*.
109. 'V Sarove sostoialas vstrecha Svyateichego Patriarkha Kirilla s rossiiskimi uchenymi-iadershchikami', *Patriarchia.ru* (2016): http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/4580022.html.
110. A. Prokhanov, 'S Kholma Vidna Vsia Rossiia', *Zavtra* (2007): http://zavtra.ru/blogs/2007-10-0311.
111. Prokhanov, *ibid*.

112. Including the military General Gennady Troshev, the movie director Nikita Mikhalkov, the Archimandrite Tikhon Shevkunov, who is allegedly Putin's personal confessor, Vladimir Alexandrov, the director of the federal state enterprise Admiralty Shipyards, the commander of Pskov's airborne division, rectors of local universities. See Prokhanov, *ibid.*
113. Prokhanov, *ibid.*
114. 'V Pskovskoi Oblasti Osviatili Krest "Sviashchennogo Kholma"', *Regnum* (2007): https://regnum.ru/news/economy/891482.html.
115. 'O Klube', *Izborskii Klub*: https://izborsk-club.ru/about.
116. A. Prokhanov, 'Raskol Intelligentsii', *Izborskii Klub* (2013): https://izborsk-club.ru/2039.
117. Prominent names include the economist Sergei Glaziev, the Nobel Prize physicist Zhores Alferov (1930–2019), Metropolitan Tikhon Shevkunov, the philosopher Aleksandr Dugin and his epigone Valerii Korovin, the writers Iurii Poliakov and Zakhar Prilepin, leading journalists for Russia's TV 'Channel One' such as Maksim Shevchenko or Mikhail Leontev, who is also the press-Secretary for the state oil company Rosneft. For a detailed analysis of the Izborskii Club, see M. Laruelle, 'The Izborsky Club, or the New Conservative Avant-Garde in Russia', *The Russian Review*, 75 (2016), pp. 626–44.
118. The 'about us' section of the Izborskii Club website writes: 'The governor of the Pskov Region A.A. Turchak played an important role in the creation of the Club.' See 'O Klube', *op. cit.*, Ref. 115.
119. Laruelle, 'The Izborsky Club, or the New Conservative Avant-Garde in Russia', *op. cit.*, Ref. 117.
120. In January 2020, the Club received a nine million rubles grant from the presidential adminsitration to launch an 'interactive course' on the theme 'Cosmos – the dream and proud of Russia'. See https://xn–80afcdbalict6afooklqi5o.xn–p1ai/public/application/item?id=A00EBDA1-6F29-4521-BBD4-9AF05B7149C2. In 2015, the Club had already received a 10 million rubles grant from the presidential adminsitration for a project on the definition of the 'Russian world'. See 'Granty ot Putina dadut za propagandu Russkogo mira i borbu c pedofilami', *RBC.ru* (2015): https://www.rbc.ru/politics/08/12/2015/5666f9cf9a7947d88622c924
121. 'Utverzhden Sostav Soveta Po Obshchestvennomu Televideniiu', *Website of the President of Russia* (2012): http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/16012. Besides, the economist Sergei Glaziev became advisor to the president on regional economic integration. Dmitri Rogozin, a nationalist politician and informal supporter of the Izborskii Club, was appointed Deputy Prime Minister in charge of the defence industry until 2018, when he became the head of Roscosmos, the state corporation for space activities.
122. See for instance the extreme right-wing nationalist opponent Aleksandr Belov, the leader of the banned 'Movement Against Illegal Immigration', who served a three-year sentence from 2015 to 2018: 'Ia – Zhertva Antisemitizma', *Lenta.Ru* (2018): https://lenta.ru/articles/2018/04/19/potkin/.
123. A. Prokhanov, 'Imperskii Stil', *Zavtra* (2007): http://zavtra.ru/blogs/2007-10-3111.
124. On 'young conservatism' and its most prominent representatives (Mikhail Remizov, Boris Mezhuev, Egor Kholmogorov and Konstantin Krylov), see M. Duynov, 'Mladokonservatizm. Ego Istoriia Ego Znachenie', *Russkii Zhurnal* (2009): http://www.russ.ru/pole/Mladokonservatizm.-Ego-istoriya-ego-znachenie. On the critical judgement towards Prokhanov's 'staropatriotizm' (*old patriotism)* developed by a prominent member of the young conservatives, Konstantin Krylov, see K. Krylov, 'Staropatriotizm', *Agentstvo Politicheskikh Novostei* (2011): https://www.apn.ru/index.php?newsid=24317.
125. See the list of experts and contributors involved in the writing of the Doctrine: http://www.rusdoctrina.ru/page95506.html
126. 'Russkii Sobor Obsudil Russkuiu Doktrinu', *Rusdoctrina* (2007): http://www.rusdoctrina.ru/page95525.html.
127. V. Averianov, 'Nuzhny Drugie Liudi', *Zavtra* (2010): http://zavtra.ru/blogs/2010-07-1431.
128. Beside Vitalii Averianov, representatives of the younger generation at the Izborskii Club include Dmitrii Egorchenkov (born 1980), Mikhail Kildiashov (born 1986), Valerii Korovin

(born 1977), Zakhar Prilepin (born 1975), Konstantin Semin (born 1980), Nikolai Starikov (born 1970) and Georgii Filimonov (born 1980).

129. See for instance the Izborskii Club's discussion about the 'combination of ultramodern science with spiritual enlightenment' held in September 2018, 'Stenogramma Kruglogo Stola Izborskogo Kluba "V Poiskakh Russkoi Mechty i Obraza Budushchego"', *Izborskii Klub* (2018): https://izborsk-club.ru/15978.
130. 'Na Iamale Otkrylos Otdelenie Izborskogo Kluba', *Izborskii Klub* (2019): https://izborsk-club.ru/16727.
131. See the first collective manifesto published by the Izborskii Club: 'Strategiia "Bolchogo Ryvka"', *Izborskii Klub* (2013): https://izborsk-club.ru/975.
132. See also, besides the report aforementioned (note 131), Prokhanov's regular praises of Stalin such as in A. Prokhanov, 'Somneniia i Nadezhdy', *Izborskii Klub* (2016): https://izborsk-club.ru/8510; A. Prokhanov, 'My – Stalinisty', *Izborskii Klub* (2015): https://izborsk-club.ru/8077.
133. M. Minkenberg, 'The Renewal of the Radical Right: Between Modernity and Anti-modernity', *Government and Opposition*, 35(2) (2000), p. 174.
134. I. Tavrovskii, 'Gliadia Nan "Kitaiskuiu Mechtu", Nuzhno Sformulirovat "Russkuiu"', *Izborskii Klub* (2015): https://izborsk-club.ru/5897; see also A. Nagornii, 'Kitaiskaia Mechta Dlia Rossii', *Izborskii Klub* (2013): https://izborsk-club.ru/1130.
135. The expression is borrowed from Yitzhak Brudny, who applied it to describe the strategy of Russian nationalists in the Soviet Union in the years 1953–1964 and 1985–1989. See Brudny, *Reinventing Russia, op. cit*. Ref. 11.
136. Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art, op. cit*., Ref. 18, p. 141.

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to Kathy Rousselet, Michael Hagemeister, Nikki Lohr and two anonymous assessors for comments on this article.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).